

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend claims 1, 3, and 6 as follows:

*Sub B3*  
1. (Amended) An exhaust passage structure in an outboard engine system, in which at least a portion of an exhaust passage means is integrally formed in a case member (41) having a drive shaft (50) accommodated therein for transmitting in driving force from an engine (E) to a propeller (52),

*a2*  
[characterized in that] wherein openings (e<sub>2</sub>, e<sub>4</sub>) of said exhaust passage means are defined in a generally upwardly and downwardly extending sidewall of said case member (41) which is disposed under an engine block (11), and an exhaust passage forming an exhaust silencing portion is defined between said case member (41) and a lid (48) which is detachably coupled to said sidewall of said case member to cover said openings (e<sub>2</sub>, e<sub>4</sub>).

3. (Amended) An exhaust passage structure in an outboard engine system in which a catalytic converter (72) for purifying an exhaust gas discharged from an engine (E) is mounted in an exhaust passage for guiding the exhaust gas,

*a3*  
[characterized in that] wherein at least a portion of the exhaust passage is integrally formed in a case member (41) which is disposed under an engine block (11) to accommodate a drive shaft (50) therein for transmitting a driving force from the engine (E) to a propeller (52); a connection into which said exhaust passage opens is formed in a side wall of said case member (41); and said catalytic converter (72) is disposed in a space surrounded by the case member (41) and a lid (48) detachably coupled to said connection to permit the exhaust gas to flow.